



MK tennis talent, Lauren Armstrong, took the title at the LTA Grand Prix event and ended a 6 month winning spell for her opponent. Eight juniors from across the region gathered at David Lloyd Hertford on Sunday 28th February to compete in the Grade 3 event. In the Under 9's events, the players play a best of 3 tie-breakers, with each tie-breaker going to 10 points. Amongst the competitors, who are some of the top UK Under 9 players, was Lauren Armstrong from Milton Keynes-based Cavill Academy at Stony Stratford Tennis Club. Over the past 6 months Lauren has progressed as a player after winning the Bucks Under 9 County Closed in August, 2 Indoor Series events and all her matches in a National competition whilst representing the Region.

9 year old Lauren had to first compete in the round robin stages of the Grand Prix event before qualifying for the semi finals. During the round robin stage, she won 2 out of the 3 matches, losing to Destinee Martins from Middlesex. Lauren has lost to Destinee in all previous encounters and in this match Destinee was triumphant as Lauren lost belief. After Lauren qualified in 2nd place of her group, she went on to play the winner of the other group in the semi finals, Essence Martins, who is Destinee's twin sister.

The semi final again proved to be a tough match but Lauren dug deep after losing the first set to win the second set and level the match. Lauren went on to book her place in the final when she took the third set 10-7 in the tie-break. Meanwhile, in the other semi final, Destinee continued to keep her run of 6 months without being defeated and met Lauren in the final. Destinee took the first set 10-6 and looked in control but from somewhere Lauren found her fighting spirit and fought back to take the second set 10-7. With the match level and an upset on the cards, Lauren stayed focussed and composed to clinch the third set 10-7 to win the tournament and further support her place as one of the UK top 5 Under 9 players.

Her coach, Simon Tomlinson from the Cavill Academy, said, "I'm delighted for Lauren as she

continues to make progress. She is a fantastic girl and puts 100% into her training, which shows when she is in competition. We've not got to get too carried away as she is still only a 9 year old girl but if she continues to work hard and keep focussed, it will be a very interesting journey for her."

This month, Lauren has been invited as one of 16 players from across the UK to play in the Masters Event at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, which will be her toughest test so far.

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